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Trinitarian Theology Matters

Trinitarian Theology is transforming my mind and my life in so many ways. I see my wife, my boys, my family, my friends, my church, people I do like and even people I don't like in a much different way. It has also changed the way I see myself. No more condemnation. No more shame. No more guilt. In one word FREEDOM! Freedom to be all that I've always been in Christ.

I came to believe various aspects of Trinitarian Theology before I knew it was called that and before I heard of theologians such as Baxter Kruger or Karl Barth. It wasn't just another band wagon I decided to jump on. I simply began to see scriptures I had never seen before.

My paradigm shift wasn't easy. The shift continues even now. It has taken years, not weeks or months. It has in fact been painful as growth often is. This is what happens when our darkness is exposed to the Light that is Jesus. Our pride takes a direct hit when we realize that what we've learned, believed and even preached was wrong.

Years ago after attempting to explain in a sermon (and failing miserably) the doctrine of the Trinity a lady came forward and asked "what relevance does the Trinity have in my life today one way or the other?" Like Forrest Gump said with his best friend Bubba dying on that shore in Vietnam, "I wish I could have come up with something better to say!"

The Trinity and Trinitarian Theology are obviously related but in my mind the first is a more academic expression while the second is a more relational (i.e. relevant) expression of the nature of God and all that flows from it. Trinitarian Theology flows from the doctrine of the Trinity, which is the foundational doctrine of the Christian faith.

In order for concepts such as adoption and inclusion and the redemption and reconciliation of all people to make any sense in our Western mind there must be an understanding of and appreciation for the perfect and unhindered relationship that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have always enjoyed with one another. A mere academic understanding of the Trinity will not lend itself to comprehending concepts such as the adoption of the entire human race.

I feel this is where many believers get stuck. A friend of mine said this: "As far as a Triune God, I don't get your point. Even the most dead Protestant denomination will agree with you as far as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is concerned, so what's the deal?"

This is huge and very telling of where many are and where some of us may be. For most Protestants and Catholics alike the doctrine of the Trinity is a dead, cold, lifeless, limpless, and boring academic doctrine that lies dormant on the shelf collecting dust. If asked what the Trinity is most Christians can't articulate it much less explain why it has any relevance in their lives.

The deal is this. At the very core of God is relationship and love. He wasn't content to keep that relationship to Himself so He (they) decided to share that with their children. One of the race of men (Jesus) is now seated face to face with the Father in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and He (Jesus) communicates and shares with us that same relationship with His Father.

A human (Jesus) helps us to see our Father the way He really is and this is eternal life - to know

the Father (John 17:3). I enjoyed the book *The Shack* (see www.theshackbook.com) for the very reason that the author brought out the relational nature of God in a very thought-provoking way.

Without understanding and appreciating the passion that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have for each other it is difficult to understand how they can have that same passion for fallen human beings who don't seem to want anything to do with them. It also makes it hard to come to grips with verses like:

John 17:20-21 Jesus' prayer and will was for all people (the world) to be one with Him and His Father.

John 12:32 Through His death all people would be drawn to Him.

Romans 5:18 All people are justified and given new life in Jesus.

Colossians 1:20 God reconciled all things (planets, dirt, trees, and even people) in Christ.

Are there verses that seem to contradict Trinitarian Theology and the adoption of the entire human race? Yes. But those verses are not where we begin. If we do then we build on a shaky foundation that will not hold up. My experience with verses like these has been that in time the Holy Spirit opens my eyes to see what they really mean in light of who Jesus is and always has been, not in light of what I think is popular opinion in Christian circles.

It is important to remember that God had a plan for humanity long before we came along and mucked it up. God gave us free will that can only be exercised within the larger and broader (and perhaps even stronger) will of God. His will was clearly expressed, declared and established before the foundation of the world.

I don't have all of the answers but I encourage all of us to be patient with each other, with ourselves and with the Holy Spirit as He continues to teach us and share His life with us. May we continue to stir one another up unto love and good deeds for the glory of Jesus!

~ Paul David Kurts